

Fireworks Safety

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The 4th of July holiday means American flags, hot dogs, watermelon and fireworks. While they are truly spectacular, fireworks can quickly turn a happy celebration into a tragedy when someone is injured.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that in 2006, an estimated 9,200 people were treated in hospital emergency rooms for firework related injuries. The majority of those injuries – about 6,400 – occurred during the month around the 4th of July.

The CPSC states, “Although legal consumer fireworks that comply with the CPSC regulations can be relatively safe, all fireworks are hazardous and can cause injury. Fireworks should be used only with extreme caution. Older children should be closely supervised, and younger children should not be allowed to play with fireworks.”

If you choose to use fireworks, please treat them with respect. Read the cautions and warnings on the package, and use common sense. Never light fireworks indoors, throw them from a moving car or light multiple fireworks at once. Be sure to follow local laws regarding the use of fireworks.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission also recommends these safety measures.

- Store fireworks in a dry, cool place until you are ready to use them. Check instructions for special storage directions.
- Do not allow young children to play with fireworks under any circumstances. Sparklers, considered by many the ideal "safe" firework for the young, burn at very high temperatures and can easily ignite clothing. Children cannot understand the danger involved and cannot act appropriately in case of emergency.
- Older children should only be allowed to use fireworks under close adult supervision. Do not allow any running or horseplay.
- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.
- Keep unused fireworks away from the area where you are lighting others.
- Never ignite fireworks in a container, especially a glass or metal container.
- Light fireworks outdoors on a smooth, flat surface, in a clear area away from houses, dry leaves or grass and flammable materials.
- Never have any part of your body directly over a firework while lighting it.
- Keep a bucket of water nearby for emergencies and for soaking fireworks that don't go off properly.
- Never try to relight or handle malfunctioning fireworks. Douse them with water, allow the water to soak in and then throw them away.
- Don't experiment with homemade fireworks.
- Keep pets indoors or away from the area when lighting fireworks.
- Obey all local laws pertaining to fireworks.

Are you ready to **safely** celebrate the 4th of July? Take this quiz from the National Council on Fireworks Safety to test your knowledge – www.fireworksafety.com/pdfs/FireworkSafetyTest.pdf.

For more information on fireworks safety, contact the Springfield-Greene County Health Department or your local fire department.